

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-4
March 28, 2023
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner James Cason

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Parks and Recreation Director, Fred Couceyro

Public Speaker(s)

Kayla Rivera-Gomez

Agenda Item G-4 [12:15 p.m.]

An update on the possibility of placing a fenced dog play area at Majorca Park.
(Sponsored by Commissioner Menendez) (Sponsored by Commissioner Anderson)

Mayor Lago: Let's go to G-4. We'll deal with G-4 here now, too. That makes sense.

Commissioner Anderson: This is more of an update from you all. Tell us what's happening.

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: Upon your direction, we had a sketch for a design of a possible concept. As you know, when we discussed this, to have a dedicated dog park area at Majorca Park. This is a little different than Catalonia, because we're not looking at a temporary, we're looking at a permanent installation here. We'll go over the design in a second, but what we think to do is present this as a concept and we want to go out to the community so we don't have one group versus another group. We advertise it out; we've advertised it April 26th, it's going to start going

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out now. We're getting the doorhangers done, we'll put it out in the community. We'll have a very healthy discussion as to whether this goes or whether it doesn't.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, Commissioners, Catalonia Park was a temporary facility, this is a permanent facility, so we're doing the same outreach that we would do. It's a brand new park to make sure because this was not addressed when this park was being proposed. So it will be the same outreach that we normally do for a brand new park, because we're completely changing the concept of the park.

Commissioner Anderson: So this dog area is the light green area?

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: Right. No. So the design as portrayed here, the dark green would be the fenced in area for the dogs. Over to the western side is the play area. We still have that rock formation with the hill that goes down that would still be area for children and kids and families, and then it would be a complete fenced in area for the dogs over on the east side of the park. There are a couple of entry ways, as you see for maintenance and then there's the one double-door that you need for dog park to make sure that the dogs don't get out when you're doing the transition; and its surrounded by the walkway that goes through starting on the west side all the way through the north, starting on the east side all the way through the north all the way to the west. So the dog, the fencing would kind of border that landscape area and would have the areas for walkways to go in.

Vice Mayor Mena: This is about eight blocks from Salvadore Park.

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: Yes, it's right across the street from the Country Club, it's on Alhambra.

Commissioner Anderson: What's the square footage in each children's play area versus the dog area?

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: I don't have that exact number.

Commissioner Anderson: More or less feet.

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: Well, you're looking at...

Vice Mayor Mena: Which side is which here?

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: The dark green is the dog area. So, if you're looking at its probably 5,000 square feet, I think.

Commissioner Anderson: And it's going to have some pretty heavy wear.

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: This is a concept; we didn't do this survey and we didn't do exact measurements yet. It was just kind of like, this is what it would look like.

Commissioner Anderson: No. I understand it's a concept. Knowing how grass won't live.

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: You wouldn't – this requirement would require that you...dog, grass or some other.

Commissioner Anderson: Artificial turf or sand, basically.

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: Yes, artificial turf, if you do it with the proper technology, get rid of some of the heat aspects of it, you can do it. Grass is not going to work there long-term because like mentioned, with Catalonia we'd be replacing that sod every couple of months.

Vice Mayor Mena: You're going to have what kind of material?

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: It would either be, you would have to do artificial turf, there's K-9 dog grass, that's specifically for dog parks, you can do sand. There's a couple of other things out there like gravel and things like that, but it all depends. There's strengths and weaknesses to each surface.

Vice Mayor Mena: It seems awfully close to Salvadore Park to me, just saying. Is it true that the scope of Salvadore changed to be sand?

Public Works Director Diaz: It was always.

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: Its always been sand.

Commissioner Anderson: Its always been sand because gravel doesn't work, the rocks don't work, the grass doesn't work.

Vice Mayor Mena: Artificial doesn't work?

Commissioner Anderson: Artificial doesn't – you get rug burn on it, you know.

Vice Mayor Mena: Got it.

Commissioner Anderson: I've taken mine to the Coconut Grove dog park and when they run fast the skin peels off the paws. It's not pretty. Anything that can handle a larger dog then you have to be concerned about that rug burn.

Vice Mayor Mena: We have a lot of sand-based dog parks locally? – are they sanitary?

Commissioner Anderson: The beach – sanitary, its like a big kitty litter box...[inaudible]

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: Not the thick pebble gravel, but the crushed surface.

Mayor Lago: Why don't we do this. We're taking this to the community, let's listen to the community, see what they have to say.

Commissioner Anderson: That's why its here, because we're listening to the community.

Mayor Lago: We are delivering on a lot of needs for park lovers. I just want to make sure we're not taking away needs for residents, just want to make sure.

Vice Mayor Mena: I'm a little – to lose a green space like that.

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: Its understood. We're just bringing it to the direction that we were given.

Commissioner Anderson: I understand.

Vice Mayor Mena: We've got to think about that.

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: Absolutely. I agree.

Commissioner Anderson: We'll find out what the community really wants.

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: We'll do that, alright.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Let's move onto H-1.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, before you move on, we do have a member of the public requesting to speak on this item.

Mayor Lago: Go ahead.

City Clerk Urquia: Its Ms. Kayla Rivera-Gomez, she's on Zoom.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Gomez, welcome to the city. You're on mute.

Ms. Gomez: Can you hear me now?

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Ms. Gomez: Thank you Mr. Mayor and Commissioners, I appreciate your letting me speak. I live at 4321 S.W. 16th Street, which is Little Gables. I use this park almost daily, both for my dog and my children. I absolutely agree that the addition of a fence will increase safety and will increase usage of that park. Families that are using the Majorca Park are families that typically live north of Alhambra. Its our neighborhood gathering place, people walk down. It's a different usage than a lot of folks were using Salvadore. We have many kids ride their bike to that park and if you're

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north of Alhambra, then riding to Salvadore Park is just not really an option. So, I look forward to public comment on that, but I think this will be definitely an improvement to that park and increase its usage by the community.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Alright. Thank you very much.